

Documents on Diplomacy: Exercises

Fact Sheet: President Polk's Directives

Nicholas Trist was known for writing long letters, but this might have been one of his longest ever. Trist penned a 65-page (handwritten) letter to his boss, Secretary of State James Buchanan explaining why he ignored Polk's order to return home after exchanging money advances with General Santa Anna. President Polk believed that Santa Anna duped Trist, so he ordered him to suspend negotiations and return to Washington. Trist disobeyed and wrote that he was morally obligated to finish the deal.

PRESIDENT POLK'S DIRECTIVES TO HIS DIPLOMATIC AGENTS

1. To settle claims left from the Mexican War of Independence (supplies and loans)
2. To adjust the Texas boundary at the Rio Grande
3. To purchase, if possible, New Mexico for \$5 million and California for \$25 million
4. To obtain possession of the bay and harbor of San Francisco
5. To secure settlements by diplomacy (Larkin, Slidell, and Trist)
6. To stop the war with Mexico at any time if it yielded the desired territories

TREATY OF GUADALUPE-HIDALGO (FEBRUARY 2, 1848) INCLUDED:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? ANALYZE THE FACTS & WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS HERE:

Did Trist secure Polk's goals despite the fact that he was ordered to stop?
Was Trist treated fairly by Polk?
Did Trist make any contribution to the country. . .or was he a disgrace?